

THE BEACON

FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

VOLUME XVIII. No. 29

THE BEACON PRESS, INC., BOSTON, MASS.

APRIL 15, 1928

SCARECAT

BY ELIZABETH COATSWORTH
IN FIVE CHAPTERS



[Our readers of last year who recall the story of "The Cat and the Captain," will be interested in this new serial by the same author.—Ed.]

CHAPTER I

JOSY and Jo first saw him as a small black spot crouched low on the railroad bridge over the river. They were out exploring. Yesterday, when they arrived at the Mansion, they had of course gone immediately to the edge of the lawn to see where all the noise and spray came from, and so had looked at the Middle Falls of the Genesee for the first time.

"Press where ye see my white plume shine amid the ranks of war, and be your oriflamme today the helmet of Navarre!" quoted Jo. "Look, Josy, it's like a thousand Henrys of Navarre charging down a hill!"

"It looks like filling a giant's tub," said Josy, who was practical.

Away down the river between the high sandstone cliffs they could see the mist rising from the Third Falls, and up the river there was the mist of the First Falls. The air was full of the roaring of water, three different sounds all twisted into one. Nearly above the First Falls hung the railroad bridge like a thread of a great black spider-web. It was higher than any building they had ever seen and, while they watched, a train came out on it, puffing like a frightened

horse, and crept across, feeling its way as it went.

"We'll go there first thing tomorrow morning," said Josy, who was a year older. They both loved climbing trees and getting out on roofs. But

this looked more exciting than anything they had ever done.

In the morning, right after breakfast with their mother, they started off.

"Now, be careful," she called after them; "don't get lost."

"We won't," they called back, and ran across the lawn into a path they saw through the pine trees. After walking a while, they came to a long flight of stairs, and that led them up to the railroad tracks, and the bridge. At first they saw nothing but the bridge. The ties were laid nearly a foot apart and you could see between them down into the river, hurrying far below. On one side of the tracks, a narrow sidewalk had been laid across the ties with a handrail, but at every step you looked down at the water moving so fast that it made you dizzy. Josy led the way.

"We'll just go out a little to see what it's like and then I think we'd better go back," she said. It was Jo who first saw something black in the middle of the strip of sidewalk.

"What's that thing?" he asked.

"Where?" said Josy.

"Right ahead — on the bridge," said Jo, looking over her shoulder.

It looked almost like a shiny black rug that some one had dropped, but when they got nearer they could see that it was a dog, crouched close to the boards and huddled up into a heap.

"He got half-way across and then was scared," said Josy. She went a little further along the bridge.

"Here, boy! here, boy!" she called.

"Here! here!" called Jo.

The dog heard them and lifted his head. He crawled a few inches toward them and then crouched down again, too terrified to move. They called and called but he wouldn't come any further.

"We'll have to go and get him," said Josy. "I do hope a train doesn't come along beside us."

Their walk to the middle of the bridge was terrifying. They held fast to the rail.

"Are you scared?" asked Jo.

"No," said Josy in a very small voice; "are you?"

"No," said Jo, not very loud, either.

All the time the dog crouched there on the bridge and the river far below them ran on between its high cliffs. They could see miles of woods and the white columns of the Mansion looking like a toy house on its green lawn. It seemed to take forever to reach the dog. As they came near, he began to whine and whimper as though his heart would break.

When they petted him, his tail thumped against the boards like a drumstick on a drum, but he never stopped whining.



Photograph by D. A. Caldwell

A brave kitten

"Come on," said Josy, and she started back. The dog crept slowly after her, crouching low. Jo followed. Whenever the dog stopped they stopped, and petted him. Then they would all move on again. At last, near the end of the bridge, the dog pushed past Josy's legs and rushed to the bank. There he waited for them, so relieved to be safe again, and so grateful that he jumped all over them, licking their hands, and running in circles around them, and leaping high in the air by their shoulders.

"Scarecat!" said Jo, laughing.

And that was how Scarecat got his name.

(To be continued)

"Quarterly Exams"

By Alice Smith

GRACE BROWN came home from school alone, for once. As she crossed the porch she heard the piano, and slipped into the room softly, knowing it must be her best-loved aunt, her mother's younger sister, who was making the family a midwinter visit.

"O Aunt Belle, how pretty! Isn't that a new song? I like that part about the little birds singing east and west. Oh, you're doing it without the notes? I thought maybe I could learn it."

Aunt Belle laughed, a pleased, merry little laugh.

"It's only one of my own little songs, Gracie. It thrills me to have you like it. I've always loved those lines of Mrs. Browning's, and this music came into my head one time. Do you really want to learn it?"

Grace stood beside Aunt Belle at the piano, trying to catch as much as she could of words and tune.

"Oh, the little birds sang east
And the little birds sang west,
And I smiled to think God's greatness
Flows around our incompleteness—
'Round our restlessness His rest."

Aunt Belle's lovely voice sang simply.

"What does it mean, Auntie Belle, about God's greatness flowing 'round? It doesn't make sense. But I like the part about the little birds."

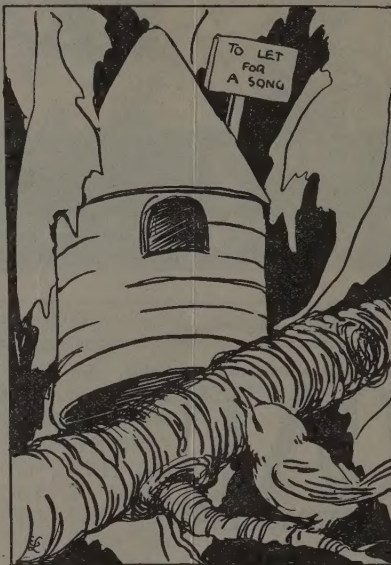
"It means that we can have God's power to do great, beautiful things," said Aunt Belle, "and so we haven't anything to worry about."

"Oh," said Grace rather breathlessly. "And what have the little birds to do with it?"

"Why, their happy songs all about must have been what made her think of it," Aunt Belle explained.

Then Mother came and asked if anybody wanted to go for a ride, so the song was left, for that time.

On Sunday evening Grace sat beside



The Little Wren

By ALICE WETHERELL

A little wren went hunting,
All on a bright Spring day,
To see if he could find a place
To build a house to stay.

"When I was here last year," he thought,
"My nest was in that tree.
But with the crowds already there
There's no place left for me."

Just then he spied, nailed to the trunk,
A house with door so small
That any bird beside a wren
Could not get in at all.

"I've found a place," the wren exclaimed,
"That must to me belong."
And then he read, above the door,
"To let, for a mere song."

So happy did the wren become
That he sang past all reason.
And ere he'd gone inside the house,
He'd paid rent for the season.

Grandmother in the big living-room window. All the rest of the family had gone to a vesper service, and Grace and Grandmother were watching the sunset together.

"It's good not to have lessons to get," sighed Grace. "I get tired of them sometimes."

She sat still, then, thinking.

"Grandmother," she began at last, "wasn't it funny for Mr. Fentriss to talk the way he did about praying? Did you notice? He said you could even ask God to help you make a cake."

"Certainly," agreed Grandmother. "I wish ministers said such things oftener. It's perfectly true."

"But Grandmother—"

"Why, yes, Child. How do you suppose I mastered that new pattern to make your sweater by?"

"Grandmother, you don't mean — you didn't —"

"Oh, yes, I did. I always do!" exclaimed Grandmother with emphasis.

"Does Mother, I wonder?" said Grace, almost in a whisper.

"Yes," replied Grandmother. "I brought her up that way."

"Do you think that's why she always finds things when the rest of us give up hunting for them? You know she just goes right to them."

"Well," said Grandmother, "it's a good way to be sure of things."

"Like Aunt Belle's song," mused Grace

A forlorn-looking little girl came in once more to the room where Aunt Belle was playing. She threw herself heavily into the big soft chair that had been placed near the window for Grandmother, but which Grandmother never in the world used, for fear, she said, of growing soft herself.

"O Aunt Belle, did you have quarterly exams when you were in high school?"

Aunt Belle just nodded, and kept on playing.

"I'm so scared!" Grace complained. "I've studied and studied, but when the day comes near I can't remember anything. The thought of those terrible questions, and having to do them all by the end of the period — and then I keep thinking, 'What if I don't pass?' It just drives me wild!"

Aunt Belle's fingers roamed prettily along the keys of the baby-grand piano that had been Daddy's Christmas present to Mother and Grace.

"She doesn't hear me," thought her dextrous niece. "Well, it's hardly worth repeating."

She sat slumped down in the big chair, her mouth much too drooping at the corners.

Aunt Belle asked suddenly, "Do you like the accompaniment any better this way, Grace?"

Grace remembered her manners and hastened to make as good a job as she could of forgetting her troubles, temporarily.

"Why, it's the little song about the birds singing and God's greatness flowing 'round!"

The music was already helping to lift the drooping corners of Grace's mouth.

"It's lovely both ways, Auntie Belle. I really can't choose," she said at last. Then urgently, "Auntie, Grandmother says she always gets God to help her with things — even knitting. What do you think of that? She even said that was probably the way Mother got to be the 'finder' of the family. It's funny, but just then, when you were singing, I

wondered if one could pass quarterly exams, that way."

Aunt Belle answered the questioning look with an odd little smile.

"I can't think of any reason why you couldn't," she said. "I should say those lessons were included in God's greatness. Where else could they come from?"

"I never thought of that before," said Grace. "It does sound reasonable."

"Where do you suppose God is while you're writing your examination paper, Gracie?" asked Aunt Belle.

"I just hadn't thought of it," Grace answered. "I supposed He was off looking after some really important affairs, I guess."

"Yes," agreed Aunt Belle; "he does that, too, only He doesn't have to go 'off' anywhere to do it — how could that be?"

"I know," said Grace softly. "Of course it's true that He couldn't be everywhere without being where I am. That's what the song means — and I said it didn't make sense!"

"What!" exclaimed Grace's father. "Report card to sign, and no fuss about 'quarterly exams'? Didn't you have any?"

Grace laughed.

"Of course we did, Daddy, and I started out to be just as scared as I always have been — but something happened."

She stopped suddenly, trying to think of a way to tell about it.

"Was it 'God's greatness'?" asked Aunt Belle, looking up from her book.

Grace nodded her head shyly, and Daddy Brown looked puzzled.

"I think you'd better tell us," suggested Grandmother. "We've all been wondering why you ate your meals as usual and smiled occasionally, although it's the last week of the quarter."

Grandmother's voice was so kind that Grace didn't mind her merry teasing.

"O Grandmother," she poured out the story, impetuously. "I almost forgot what to do, and there was some of that awful Medieval History that was just *lost* — I thought I must have missed that lesson entirely when we went over it, but I remembered finally about your saying God helped you make my sweater and that it was He who helped Mother find things, so I — well, — I just — tried it, and oh, you'll never believe it! That very page came into my mind just the way it is in the book, footnotes and all — and dates, too."

"Oh, yes, we believe it, dear," said Mother, and Daddy just said nothing and signed the card — but Grace thought his face had a glad expression.

"I can trust Him who provides

The thirsty ground with dew,

And round the wounded beetle builds

His grassy house anew."

A True Story of Jack

By Ethel S. Williams

MANY years ago my mother lived with her parents and sister at Carmarthen, a small town in South Wales. One day her sister met with some children who were pulling a poor little unfledged bird about on the ground by a string tied to one of its legs. Now my aunt could not bear to see cruelty, and offered the children two-pence (four cents) for the bird, which they gladly accepted. How they came by their plaything I do not know, — perhaps it had fallen out of a nest. It must have been very young, as it could not stand nor even hold up its head.

The helpless little thing was put into a large wicker dove cage, and at first my aunt did not expect it to live, though it seemed uninjured except for the loss of one toe. However, it did not die, and had a great appetite! When it wanted to be fed it opened its huge beak wide and said "Caw, caw." Then whoever could spare time found something to drop into the bird's throat. Surprisingly soon its beak was open again and some more food given, and it did not much matter what the food was: it might be a caterpillar or worm out of the garden, bread and milk, or rice pudding!

The bird was called "Jack" because it was thought to be a jackdaw, a black bird common in England and Wales, but before long it became obvious that it was a larger kind of bird, and then it was supposed to be a rook. Finally it proved to be a still larger bird, a carrion crow, which is a kind of raven.

Jack outgrew the dove cage and a roost was made for him under the porch over the back door. This was called "Jack's castle." He flew in and out of it just as he liked, and could come into the house when he wished. He spent a great deal of his time sitting on the open kitchen window watching the cook. Not a feather of his splendid wings was ever cut, but he chose to stay on with the people who had brought him up, although he was quite free to fly away at any time. Of course he did not need to be fed as constantly as when he was younger, and as he spent so much time in the kitchen he could never have been short of food. He was particularly fond of grocer's currants, and when my mother was making a cake she had to put some up in a little paper parcel for Jack, to prevent his walking about the table and helping himself. Sometimes if Jack had a choice morsel of food to spare he would turn up the corner of the hearth-rug, push his treasure underneath, and then carefully replace the hearth-rug. Every day after dinner a plate of scraps was put out for him, and he enjoyed eating these in the garden. It seemed a very

strange life for a wild bird, did it not?

These birds, like parrots, can be taught to talk, but no one ever tried to teach Jack. However, crows are great imitators, and he amused himself by making various noises — mewling, coughing and sneezing very accurately. Once he was heard grunting like a pig, although there were not supposed to be any pigs near. This led to the discovery that somebody was keeping a pig in the borough, which was not allowed, and the owner was punished for it.

My grandfather often took a glass of sherry after dinner, and one day Jack drank the little drop of wine that was left at the bottom of the glass, after which he reeled about and fell down dead drunk on the table! From this time on the mere sight of a perfectly clear wineglass would make him go through the same performances. First he rattled his beak in the glass, and then he dropped down as if affected by the wine! He did not get a chance to be tipsy again, but he enjoyed rehearsing what had happened.

In the Spring he would bring home sticks to his roost, showing that he had the instinct of making a nest, but he did not know how to put them together. Perhaps he needed the help of a mate.

After more than two years had passed, one day when Jack was in the garden a crowd of jackdaws came flying overhead in pursuit of a large black bird, — no doubt a crow. The clamor excited Jack immensely, and he flew off to join them, and he never returned. However, he did not forget his old life, for long afterwards when my grandfather and mother and aunt were taking a walk a great black bird flew down from a tree, and, wonderful to say, it was Jack! He evidently had recognized their voices, and wished to make himself known to them, as he began going through his old tricks of mewling, sneezing, etc.! There was another crow in the tree, probably a mate that he had rescued from that crowd of jackdaws. And what must she have thought of his strange behavior! This was the last time he was seen by the family, but carrion crows are extremely long-lived birds, and so I hope he has enjoyed a great many happy years in his natural wild state.

The Other Fellow

By E. E. BROWN

I think if we could only see

Our neighbor's point of view,

'Twould drive away in work and play

The thoughtless things we do;

If we would pause and search the cause

Of what to us seems queer,

Perhaps we'd find a troubled mind

That just needs help and cheer, —

A friendly smile once in a while

A world of good may do,

Let's "lend a hand" and understand

The other fellow's view.

THE BEACON CLUB

The Editor's Post Box

504 SOUTH LOCUST ST.,
OKMULGEE, OKLA.

Dear Editor: I was looking over *The Beacon* today and found an interesting story, "Jane Visits Her Aunt Sarah." I read several others and turning to the puzzles on the back, I tried several, solving the Transposition Puzzle, the solution of which I am sending.

I enjoy *The Beacon*.

I go to our Unitarian Sunday school here. We have fifteen pupils and five teachers. In my class we are studying "The History of the Religion of Israel," by Crawford H. Toy. I find it exceedingly interesting and instructive.

Very truly yours,
EVANGELINE QUINN.

MILFORD, N. H.

Dear Beacon Editor: I should like to belong to the Beacon Club and wear its button. I am ten years old and in the fifth grade in school. I go to the Unitarian Sunday school. Our minister's name is Rev. Francis P. Daniels, and my Sunday school teacher's name is Mrs. Davis. I read the *Beacons* every Sunday and enjoy them very much. I should like some one of my age to correspond with me.

Yours truly,
ARLINE PERHAM.

14268 OHIO AVE.,
DETROIT, MICH.

Dear Editor: I get and read *The Beacon* every Sunday. I am ten years old and in the fifth grade. Our minister is Dr. Reccord. My teacher is Mr. Steyskel. I desire to become a member of the Beacon Club and wear its button. I should also like to have some correspondents.

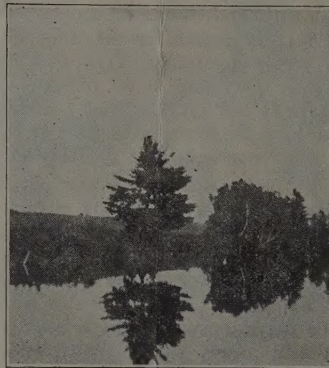
Yours sincerely,
ROYCE LEER.

19 HOPEDALE ST.,
HOPEDALE, MASS.

Dear Editor: I am a member of the Beacon Club but I have lost my pin. I should be pleased if you would send me another. I am thirteen years old and in the first year of High School. I should like very much to correspond with other girls of my own age.

Yours truly,
MARJORIE E. ARNOLD.

OUR PURPOSE: Helpfulness.
OUR MOTTO: Let your light shine.
OUR BADGE: The Beacon Club Button.



In God's Wonderland

By M. LOUISE C. HASTINGS

It is a wonderful gift to be able to see. So many people have eyes, but so few know how to use them. Some people see only unpleasant things, distorted things. The beautiful things in life seem to slip by unknown and unseen.

People looking at the same picture, or the same view, do not see it in the same way, nor do they get the same thoughts from it. One sees it all in a general way, and enjoys it; one sees detail in form or color, or some special thing attracts; another looks at the picture and beautiful thoughts come to the mind; and still another feels the beauty and feels God behind it all.

It is a wonderful thing to see the beautiful in nature, but it is a far greater thing to find God there. To be conscious of God in the midst of the beautiful, whether it is in nature or in human nature, is an experience that one never forgets. That is the way to use our eyes, — to see the beauty in the great world about us, and then to feel the Greater Beauty beyond it.

When you see the reflection in the water, or when you look at a bit of mountain glory, or when you watch the evening sky, use your spiritual eyes too, and see God in it all.

Notice how clearly the white pine is reflected in the water in this scene shown here. It is quite wonderful, isn't it? The birches are beautiful, too. Do you get any "feel" from such a picture as this?

"The heavens declare the glory of God
And the firmament showeth His handi-
work."

Puzzlers

Jumbled Bodies of Water

1. Ta, ra, ra! Ned, I see men.
2. Ha, a bee! Yes, pack.
3. A trace, I said.
4. Pug flies ran.
5. All make a pinch.
6. Real keg at last.
7. Lug fox, if come.
8. Lions dug land, son.
9. I, Dan, in canoe.
10. I hang hens, Nell—C?
11. As grant bent a ray.

L. B. E.

Twisted Names of Prophets

1. Damomhem.
2. Idavd.
3. Senjs.
4. Orzatoers.
5. Esoms.

JEAN FOSTER.

Twisted Names of Cities and Towns in Maine

1. Ldnparot.
2. Taugua.
3. Gnabro.
4. Torperef.

OLIVE WENTWORTH.

Diamond

1. Consonant.
2. Color.
3. Boy's name.
4. Pertaining to relative state of moisture.
5. Consonant.

—Boyland.

Answers to Puzzles in No. 27

Enigma.—The time of the singing of birds is come.

Twisted Names of Girls.—Beatrix.
2. Jane. 3. Marian. 4. Anne. 5. Peggy.
6. Drina. 7. Barbara. 8. Ellen.

THE BEACON is published weekly from the first Sunday of October to the first Sunday of June, by THE BEACON PRESS, INC., 25 Beacon St., Boston, Mass. Distributed also at 235 Madison Ave., New York City; 105 S. Dearborn St., Chicago; 612 Phelan Bldg., San Francisco.

Single subscription, 60 cents.

School subscription, 50 cents.

Entered at the Boston Post-Office as second-class matter. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on September 13, 1913.
Printed in U. S. A.